



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Rich fields, with corn o'er ran,
Not servile adoration paid to pride;
Not stars, by flattery gain'd,
Not gilded coronets, and blazon'd arms;
Not souls by meanness stain'd,
Whose low brow'd baseness, honour never
warms.

No—Freedom, ever bold,
With power of happiness alone endued;
Not lifeless, dull, and cold
As the vile Sycophant's disgusting brood.
Bold Freedom—gift divine—

By Heaven bestowed on th' independent
soul,

Which Tyrants can't confine
Within the fetters of unjust controul.

This constitutes a man!
And virtuous deeds, by Virtue's dictates
taught,

Which fearless dares to scan
With nicest scrutiny, each latent thought.
Struck by her sacred nod,
The fiend *servility*, unheeded shrinks,
And hard *constraint's* keen rod
In her great presence, unguarded sinks.
Thus by wise Heaven's decree
'Tis noble Freedom, join'd with virtue's
charms,

That form, what man should be,
Brave man! who shrinks alone at guilt's
alarms.

Poetical Register for 1803, p. 137.

REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

*On National Government by George En-
sor esq. Author of "the Independent
Man, and Principles of Morality,"*
2 vols. 8vo. p. p. 456 and 487. Price
one Guinea. London, Printed by J.
Johnson & Co. for the Benefit of the
literary fund.

OUR countryman, the author of
these volumes, is known in the
literary world as author of "the
Principles of morality" published in
1801, and of "the Independent Man,"
published in 1806. They with the
present work, and some volumes which
are yet to follow, form a general plan
for man in his individual and social
capacity, and having in his former
publication discussed the first part of
his subject, he now proceed to pub-
lish a scheme for national government.
In this country he is known not merely
as the solitary recluse in his closet, for he
has judiciously added practice to theo-
ry, and is noted in the neighbourhood
of his residence at Ardress in the
county of Armagh, as possessing much
actual benevolence, and forming a
virtuous exception to many of his own
rank in life, acting very differently
from the fox hunting and party follow-
ing squires of Ireland, who, like their
prototype Nimrod, follow the double
occupation of being mighty hunters,
and whose "prey is man." In 1806 he
served the office of high sheriff for
the county of Armagh, and is gene-
rally an active member of the grand jury
of that county, in which latter capacity

he has not been unmindful of the interests
of this country as may appear by the
resolutions published by that body on the
subject of oppressive exactions in levy-
ing, &c. on some parts of that county.

The present work is the result of
much reflection, and certainly of
much reading. He exemplifies the
maxim of Bacon, "that reading
makes a full man." Indeed his quota-
tions are so abundant, and he draws
his authorities so copiously from books,
that there is some danger of his re-
lying too much on precedents already
formed, instead of drawing from the
original resources of his own mind,
and that *what has been written*, is suf-
fered to have more weight, than what
ought to be done. We are apt to va-
lue our knowledge, in proportion as
it has cost us, and those who have
passed laborious days, and toilsome
nights in gleaning through the library,
may be in danger of attaching more
weight to precedents, than is consist-
ent with their intrinsic value.

There is however much originality
and great depth of research in this
performance. We can warmly recom-
mend it to our readers, and have on-
ly to regret that from the apathy and
mawkishness of the present times, we
fear it will be too little popular, and
but seldom read. It is a symptom
of bad times, when works of genuine
merit are neglected, because they con-
tain matter too strong for the diges-
tive organs of the many, who if they

read at all can bear nothing stronger than the politics of the day dressed up by venal writers, to suit a diseased palate, or the whipt cream of works of fancy. They dislike to have their dreams of security disturbed by unpleasant truths, and become dupes of deception, and to that worst species of it, self-deception, and lest truth should unwelcome intrude, they abstain from all writings, which promise serious disquisitions. To such readers although so many momentous events of the highest interest to us mark the present crisis, tales of other times, are delicious reading, and Walter Scott stands distinguished as the favourite high priest of this sect of sentimentalists, and worshippers of apathy.

From the preliminary discourse, we give the following quotations, to mark the spirit of the writer, and afford a specimen of the work.

"There are some in this country who consider the English constitution not only as the most perfect form of government that has ever existed, but profess that it is as honest in its administration as any government can be, which has mortals for its ministers. These men, so far from admitting a hint or expression against its principles, are absolute and declared enemies to any attempt for its amendment. I have myself heard a member of the house of Lords, who possessed vast dominions in England, Ireland and Scotland on a motion for general reform, with impatience and wonder ask, "What do the people want?" In the same tone a farmer general in France, who had probably beggared a province, and whose rapacity had hastened the late revolution, exclaimed, "What need of reformation? To such men I can make no reply; they neither read nor think, and surely they must be incapable of both reading and thinking, who averred, that France wanted no reformation, as well as they who pronounce, because in their estimate the constitution of the British empire is incapable of being meliorated either in principle or practice, that the people of England are capricious and visionary, if they wish that their laws, regulations, and government were improved."

"Time," says Bacon, "is the greatest innovator, and if time of course alter things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel may not alter them to the better, what must be the end?"

"Thus political affairs rapidly advance to such a desperate extreme, that the government of France stood like a vast pile distracted and overhanging its foundations, so momentous yet calamitous, that no wise man, however benevolent, durst approach it with assistance, lest he should be buried in its ruins. It fell, whether absolutely by its own decay, or whether its fall were hastened by the feeble attempts that were employed to suspend its fate; it fell, overwhelming kings, nobles, hierarchy, fanatics, and philosophers, the enemies of freedom and the friends of liberty, with universal perdition, a dreadful example of the effects of reformation delayed till reformation became ineffectual."

"I have shown that many nations possessing similar constitutions, were once not less but more free than Britain. I need not inform the reader, that they are now enslaved: and why have they fallen, while England still confronts her danger? They did not reform their vices, till they were inextricably involved with the texture of the state; and must not the same consequences overtake the British people, if the legislature persist in retarding the day of reformation? For, beside many great corruptions, that regarding the representation of the people in parliament is so mortal in its effects, that, if not corrected promptly, the constitution must not only in effect, but without pretence or subterfuge, sink into a mere monarchy."

"Reform, or you perish suicides! the victims of your own crimes. England, though not erect, is not prostrate; and while Sweden, Denmark, the states of Germany and Italy, Spain, and France, are enthralled, she has preserved herself from subjection, by the successive and magnanimous endeavours of her people to withstand the tyranny of kings and ministers, and by their insuperable fortitude in forcing these to retract their encroachments. What had England been without Magna Charta a thousand times confirmed?"

What without the petition of Rights in Charles the First's reign? What without the bravery of Hamden, who though a single citizen, resisted the rapacious prerogative of the crown? What without the bill of rights, the habeas corpus, the condemnation of general warrants? She would have been as Spain, as Sweden, as Norway:—nay perhaps she had been a province to France, the slave of an enslaved people.”

He shows that the people are generally more averse from innovation than prone to accelerate it.

“So entirely are men the creatures of habit, that they are often fond of their misfortunes, and dote on them in proportion to their antiquity. Length of time in their apprehensions alters the nature of things. What has been long established they esteem well established; as if a vice of long continuance were not error in its old age. It is therefore false that men are disposed to innovation; nor is it less so, that a desire of alteration would be most fatal to the interests of society; on the contrary it would be much more fortunate for mankind, if they were more disposed to amend their situation by experiments. Great things might be expected from this aspiring temper, if indeed such a temper itself do not manifest a considerable proficiency in virtue.”

“To impute an innovating spirit to mankind in law or government, is contradicted by the universal evidence of history: and I have quoted instances of men and nations, who have preferred inveterate bondage to innovated liberty, when the latter had been honestly proposed to them for their acceptance. Consider this point in every view, compare the everlasting duration of tyrannies, and the occasional insurrections of the oppressed. How many nations have been imperceptibly the victims of despotism. If ever the people rose, it was merely to punish some great criminals: which being effected, they relapsed into their former apathy. Even of those who carried their notions beyond this summary vengeance to a renovation of the state, what have they effected? Look to the British revolution in 1688, a counterpart in politics for the re-

formation in religion. Look a century after to the conduct of the French: their revolution, that child which had been brought forth with such unexampled agonies, they destroyed almost at its birth. Not even the English at the restoration with more zeal hailed Charles, the desolate offspring of a despicable sire, than the French returned to monarchy. A king they would have, for a king they had had. The crown was offered to Moreau and his virtue rejected it. The sequel is told in the holy apologue of the bumble, which acted among the king loving shrubs.”

In the body of the work, our author proceeds to treat of the different kinds of government existing, of monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, and of a mixed sort, and points out the defects of each. In this review, the British constitution does not escape censure. He takes a view of constitutions ancient and modern; Sparta, Athens, China, Hindostan, and the governments of Europe, are brought in to undergo a comprehensive examination. It is shown by what means, the latter gradually lost their liberties, through the gradual encroachments of power, and the danger to which our countries are exposed, from the progressive operations of these causes. He defends the people against the charge of cruelty, and admits the accusation of their inconstancy in the following quotations, which are exhibited to our readers.

“It is said, that democracies are lawless in the execution of their power. How is this even applicable to the very mob? The insurrection in 1381 has more than once been quoted to show the extravagance of the people. It has also been intimated, that the opinions professed by the insurgents showed the danger of instructing the people in the rudiments of learning; the barons of those days petitioned the king that no *villey*n should be permitted to send his son to school. It is true that at this time a dawn of light cast a faint and false illumination on the minds of mankind, but the misfortune of this and of many preceding and subsequent periods was, that the lower orders advanced in knowledge, while the higher

were retrograde or stationary, not knowing, or not heeding what became them, and what was suitable to others.

The improvements of the people had however no influence on this commotion. In 1377, four years before this famous insurrection, a law was enacted, on which Barrington observes, "nothing could be more oppressive than this law in every part of it; and we find by different records in Rymer, that this oppression was in reality the occasion of the famous insurrection under Wat Tyler, and Jack Straw." Neither was this the immediate cause of the insurrection. It was only aiding and preparatory to the event. A grievous tax had been imposed. It was exacted with rigour, and insult was added to violence. Among many other violations of all that was respectable and just, a tax-gatherer attempted to exhibit an indecent proof, that a female had reached the age taxable by the law. One hundred thousand people rose in arms in consequence of this brutality. What was the conduct of this oppressed, insulted, and irresistible multitude, who could have instantly swept away all their extraordinary and subordinate tyrants? Having committed a small though unjust reprisal, on the obvious authors of their dishonour and misery, with absolute power in their hands, they demanded pardon, abolition of slavery, freedom of commerce in market towns without toll or imposts, a fixed rent for land, instead of the pernicious and variable services due by villenage. Being promised these requests, the reasonableness of which, time has confirmed, they separated in peace. But mark the consequence, mark and compare the conduct of the people, of the populace, with that of the monarch and the aristocracy; all the promises made by these to the people were retracted, and the act of indemnity revoked. Nay, the fifth of Richard the second recites, that many of the rioters had been executed without due process or trial; on which account the king grants a general pardon to be pleaded against any prosecutions, that may be commenced; "which seems to be a law," says Barrington "of as alarming a nature to the liberty of the subject,

as can be found in the whole code of statutes. Such are your kings, and barons, and such your deluded oppressed people. It is said that the people are inconstant. They are so: and most inconstant in prosecuting their rights, while monarchies and aristocracies pursue their selfish interests with pertinacious wickedness. They are most inconstant; for having resolved after great and frequent provocations to have their grievances redressed, nothing is more common than to find them, by evasive arts, by soothing words, or even by something less imposing than either, induced to relinquish their duty and their designs. The Plebeians of Rome harassed on every side by the Patricians, abandoned the city; but a tale of the Belly and the Members from Menenius assuages their rage, and they return to the city. The people are so inconstant, that their unsuspecting carelessness sometimes betrays them into ludicrous situations. I shall quote an instance to this effect from the conduct of a people, very jocular, but so singularly oppressed, that their pleasantry is most remarkable. A report was circulated in Dublin during a Duke of Bedford's administration, that a union between England and Ireland, a measure ever deprecated by the people, was to be proposed to parliament. The populace assembled in College Green, threatened and insulted some members of parliament, and imposed oaths on others; then broke into the house of commons, placed an old woman in the speaker's chair, and began to debate on the propriety of introducing pipes and tobacco. Such is the inconstancy of the people."

The following remarks on the disinclination to a serious investigation of politics, and their great importance compared with other pursuits, are deserving of attention.

"Every art and profession has its teachers, and its institutions, except political philosophy; and how many thousand books are written on topics comparatively and absolutely frivolous for one written on this predisposing science. This modern apathy toward political philosophy is ominous, is lamentable. How mortified must

be the sensations of Europe in this respect, when the British are dead to its voice! Indeed to be more remiss than the British, is scarcely possible. For political philosophy, and authors, and readers apart, the legislature enacts the most momentous statutes with the utmost unconcern. This apathy is discouraging to authors; they must feel dissatisfied from the reflection, that they probably write for few readers. Yet an individual may occasionally arise, who will esteem this general insensibility to such paramount considerations a motive to his enterprise. He will consider, that the greater difficulty there is to excite an interest for the reformation of laws and states, the greater will be his glory, if he effect his purpose; and great will be his satisfaction, should he contribute but remotely to the event."

At page 207 of the 1st vol. he enters into a defence of Ireland against the misrepresentation of a long array of writers; and among others, Malthus, for his remarks on the potatoe system of population, receives some just correction. But the quotation, we regret, is too long for our pages. The author throughout the entire work, is the enlightened and liberal advocate of Catholic emancipation, and a strenuous opposer of the union.

On the qualifications of representatives, he makes the following judicious observations on wealth.

"But why should riches qualify a legislator? Riches are proofs of opulence and nothing more. The richest man may be the most stupid, and the most corrupt person in the community. Riches are inherited, granted by caprice, accidentally obtained, or they may be the fruits of extortion and fraud. When money authorises individuals to attain the highest political consequence, it is a greater disgrace to be poor than to be wicked. Then the aspiring say, with Milwood the courtesan, "My soul disdained dependence and contempt. Riches, no matter by what means obtained, I saw secured the worst of men from both. I found it therefore necessary to be rich, and to this end I summoned all my arts. You call them wicked, be it so," &c. To make

wealth a criterion of merit, or an indispensable preparation for civil and political consequence, is perverse and unpopular."

After showing the defects of existing establishments, our author proceeds to develop his own plan of government, which consists of an elective administration, a senate and house of representatives, all chosen in such a manner as to depend on the choice of these people; but the mode of election guarded by such precautions as tend to insure from the dangers of popular ferment, or popular corruption. Opinions will differ on the utility and practicability of some part of the plans, if they were to be carried into effect; but they are fair objects of discussion in a free country. The author expresses himself with much calmness and moderation, and suggests many practical hints, which may prove of the highest importance in the interesting science of legislation. Like Plato in his Republic, Sir Thomas More in his Utopia, and Harrington in his Oceana, he gives many a delightful vision, and does not fail to impress his readers with the most favourable opinions of his exalted morality, and real benevolence of heart. But reform is out of fashion, and we see at present no prospect of any voice in its favour being in the smallest degree attended to.

After a full detail of his sentiments on the subject of government, the author proceeds to give his opinion on religion, and religious establishments. His creed is simple, but if it is not as long as some others, it is not defective in the points essential to a strict and comprehensive morality. He fearlessly, yet not obtrusively avows his objections to popular belief. To establishments in the name of religion, to the unnatural alliance between church and state; and to the system of tithes, he is a decided and undaunted opponent. His opinions may shock the timid; but he can be more easily answered by the common weapon of abuse with which supposed heretics are almost universally, and as if of right opposed, than by sound argument. He unfolds his opinions on the subject of public instruction. Different readers will form

different judgments on this point. He disapproves of a melancholy manner of spending the remaining part of the periodical day of rest, and after the season of public instruction in the morning. He recommends athletic exercises to the working classes. It may be allowed to remark, that violent exercises are not always best calculated for those who have laboured hard through the week: to them rest of body is the best relaxation, and might be made highly conducive to the improvement of mind, by a suitable course of reading, gradually rising so as to be adapted to their opening and unfolding capacities: while such, whose sedentary employment might render more exercise of body necessary, would find rational amusement in a social walk into the country, and in which their families might partake to the enlargement, and wider spread of the domestic affections. The uninformed classes of society are peculiarly liable to mispend their leisure, and there is much cause to fear that public assemblages for exercise would speedily produce drunkenness, dissipation and those evils, which are exemplified in the Sunday hurling matches of the south of Ireland. It would be of essential advantage to infuse more of mind into the amusements of every rank.

Our author finishes his present labour with the following remarks.

"I now conclude the first part of my plan for the government of nations. The temper, which this work will excite towards me, I anticipate; nor do I expect, that I shall be favourably heard. I make this observation, not for the purpose of bewailing my fate, or of moving the reader's compassion for a suffering martyr, I say so merely to evince, that I am not ignorant of the disposition of the times, and of the state of society. That I shall be slandered and misinterpreted, why should I doubt? when I prefer a state, in which the executive power should not be master, but minister; and when I think that a commonwealth may be framed without any miraculous assistance, more conducive to good government than any monarchy, by any management that ever existed, or that can exist, is capable

BELFAST MAG. NO. XXVIII.

of effecting; I have imagined things even still more offensive: I have proved, that it would be wise to divert the religious belief of mankind from fables to facts, and from frights to philosophy. In fine I have taken arms against a host of errors, and against the chief, Superstition,—that enormous monster whose head reaches to Heaven, while her feet rests on the abyss."

We fear he forms a just expectation of the verdict and decision of the community at present. He will either be passed unnoticed with scorn and indifference, or be harshly condemned as the setter forth of strange doctrine. Like those who in every age, have advanced before their contemporaries, and have facilitated the way to improvement in succeeding generations, he must be contented with the approbation of his own mind, and with a dignified appeal to posterity, who frequently in the march of mind tacitly adopt those opinions decreed as errors by the preceding generation, and not unfrequently appropriate as their own discoveries, the hints of their forerunners in the work of reform. They who are willing to think, and are not completely frightened by the bugbear of prejudice will find much food in these volumes. They will find many materials plentifully arranged to serve as incentives to thinking. If they cannot acquiesce in all points they may be stimulated to that healthful exercise of mind, which promotes the vigour of the mental faculties. Rust is generally attendant on disuse, and is very prevalent in this day, when so many indolently repose on authority without examination. k.

Poems, and Songs on different subjects;
by Andrew M'Kenzie. Belfast printed
by Alexander Mackay, 1810, 180
p p. 12mo. price 3s 4d

WE have not changed our opinion, that poetry being a delicacy, not a necessary of life, should be very good, or writers should be content to write in plain prose. Yet this rule requires a latitude of construction, and before judging by the strict canons of criticism it is proper to examine how far what Z z